

THE PRODUCT MANAGER APTITUDE QUIZ

By Linda Gorchels

Rate each of these statements on a 1-5 scale, with 1 being "strongly enjoy," 3 being "comfortable with" and 5 being "this isn't me!" Honest answers to the questions will help you assess how strongly suited you are for a career in product management.

Do you enjoy, or are you at least comfortable with ...

- 1 2 3 4 5 1. Being held accountable for your actions and decisions, whether you have total control over outcomes?
- 1 2 3 4 5 2. Attaining results without being the center of attention?
- 1 2 3 4 5 3. The ambiguity and risk-taking that are inherent in many entrepreneurial ventures?
- 1 2 3 4 5 4. Interacting with customers from marketing research through sales to problem resolution?
- 1 2 3 4 5 5. Feeling empathy for customers?
- 1 2 3 4 5 6. Profiling markets based on both quantitative data and qualitative behavioral insights?
- 1 2 3 4 5 7. Model building to better understand market opportunities?
- 1 2 3 4 5 8. Defining differential advantages using a customer lens rather than simply what you and your company think is unique and interesting?
- 1 2 3 4 5 9. Strategizing to beat the competition?
- 1 2 3 4 5 10. Challenging yourself to confront the sustainability of current advantages?
- 1 2 3 4 5 11. Studying the future to develop strategic plans—i.e., being a visionary?
- 1 2 3 4 5 12. Triggering change efforts and being involved with change initiatives?
- 1 2 3 4 5 13. Self-motivation?
- 1 2 3 4 5 14. Inspiring others?
- 1 2 3 4 5 15. Moving beyond "canned" best practices to create meaningful and profitable directions for your product(s)?
- 1 2 3 4 5 16. Using both analytical and creative thinking?

- 1 2 3 4 5 17. Technical proficiency in your industry?
- 1 2 3 4 5 18. Asking questions from many angles and maintaining a sense of curiosity?
- 1 2 3 4 5 19. Making recommendations on potentially risky product or service innovations?
- 1 2 3 4 5 20. Bouncing back from failures?
- 1 2 3 4 5 21. Translating customer input into product requirements?
- 1 2 3 4 5 22. Turning creative insights into profitable products and services?
- 1 2 3 4 5 23. Compiling data that supports the rationale for new products?
- 1 2 3 4 5 24. Managing projects?
- 1 2 3 4 5 25. Energizing support for new products from ideation through commercialization?
- 1 2 3 4 5 26. Dealing with the details of a product launch?
- 1 2 3 4 5 27. Working as part of a team?
- 1 2 3 4 5 28. Earning trust, even when it takes time?
- 1 2 3 4 5 29. Collaborating with people who don't report to you to execute product plans?
- 1 2 3 4 5 30. Persuading (selling your ideas to) relevant individuals, inspiring them toward a common goal?
- 1 2 3 4 5 31. Influencing people you have no direct authority over?
- 1 2 3 4 5 32. Interacting with sales to better serve customers?
- 1 2 3 4 5 33. Corporate social networking and making strong connections?
- 1 2 3 4 5 33. Corporate social networking and making strong connections?
- 1 2 3 4 5 34. Soliciting feedback and finding mentors and allies?
- 1 2 3 4 5 35. Leveraging the work of others?
- 1 2 3 4 5 36. Translating technical jargon into persuasive customer narratives?
- 1 2 3 4 5 37. Defining customer definitions of value, even when they're different from your own?
- 1 2 3 4 5 38. Revising customer-defined value as circumstances change?
- 1 2 3 4 5 39. Looking for new ways to add value to existing products and services?

- 1 2 3 4 5 40. Targeting weak products for elimination?
- 1 2 3 4 5 41. Creating long-term strategies for mature products?
- 1 2 3 4 5 42. Applying financial literacy to product decisions?
- 1 2 3 4 5 43. Assessing how various financial metrics impact behavior and/or interpreting results differently?
- 1 2 3 4 5 44. Tracking financial performance against plan?
- 1 2 3 4 5 45. Delving into pricing strategy to capture more of the value created by your offer?

Interpreting your results

The more often you answer 1 or 2 to these questions, the stronger is your aptitude for product management.

The next question is whether you are more suited for full-stream, upstream, or downstream product management.

Sum up and average your scores for the questions in each column below. The lower the average, and the greater number of 1 or 2 scores, the stronger is your innate aptitude for that league of product management.

Question Set 1 *(general aptitudes)*

1
2
4
5
6
7
10
13
14
15
16
17
18
27
28
29
30
31
33
34
35
36
37
42
43
44
45

Question Set 2 *(upstream)*

3
11
12
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

Question Set 3 *(downstream)*

8
9
32
38
39
40
41

Average for Set 1:

Set 2:

Set 3: